

# **Public Libraries**



## **Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority**

**Revision  
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Local Government  
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# Functional and Organizational Analysis of Public Libraries

## Sources of Information

- Representatives of the Alabama Public Library Service
- Representatives of Local Public Libraries
- *Alabama Administrative Code*, Chapters 520-1-1 through 520-6-1 (2000)
- Alabama Public Library Service. *50 Years of Serving: Alabama Public Library Service, 1939-1989* (1989).
- Code of Alabama 1975 § 11-90-1 through 11-90-4; § 41-8-1 through 41-8-10.
- “Laws Governing the Department of Archives and History.” *State of Alabama. Department of Archives and History. Bulletin No. 4* (1907).
- Owen, Thomas McAdory. *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (1921).
- Solinet. “The Alabama Virtual Library is Here!” *SoliNEWS* (Fall 2000).

## Historical Context

Initially “in Alabama, the concept of public library service... was something done on a volunteer basis for a limited clientele.” Library development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century followed a course similar to that of other social services, moving gradually “from the concept of volunteer/benevolent activity to an agency that merited the support of the governmental body.” (Unless otherwise cited, quotations are from the APLS pamphlet *50 Years of Serving*.) The history of Alabama’s libraries really “began with the Alabama Federation of Women’s Clubs [AFWC],” which by 1900 was operating 12 traveling libraries for “any women’s club, school, or community” that requested them and could pay a dollar to cover transportation costs.

In 1905, the federation turned over its “1,700 books, nine bookcases, and \$9.81” to the Alabama Library Association, which had been established in Montgomery a year earlier. Dr. Thomas Owen – founder and director of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) – also became the new association’s president. His avowed purpose was the “promotion of libraries and library interest in Alabama” (Owen, vol. II, p. 877), and most of the state’s existing public, school, and academic libraries eventually joined. Not surprisingly, Dr. Owen managed to have the leading role assigned to his department. Under legislation passed in 1907 (Alabama Act 1907-255), the state archives was made responsible for encouraging and assisting “in the establishment of public and school libraries,” improving and strengthening “those already in existence,” and giving advice “to libraries and library workers in administration [and library] methods and economy.” It also began to conduct “a system of traveling libraries” that incorporated those previously dispatched by the AFWC.

Even with a state infrastructure now in place, Alabama’s club women remained active in support of public libraries. By 1924, they were pressing counties and municipalities for money to fund “free public libraries” made possible by recent legislation (see the Code of Alabama 1975 § 11-90-1 through -4). Library construction was materially assisted by the Carnegie Foundation, which built new facilities in ten Alabama cities before 1921 (Owen, vol. II, pp. 876-77). By the

late 1930s, as public libraries continued to proliferate, the AFWC was calling for a stronger mechanism of state oversight responsibility. "To accomplish this objective, resolutions were drawn by almost every federated [women's] club in the state, telegrams were sent, legislators were interviewed, a shower of postcards was sent." Leaving no stone unturned, the AFWC's president "persuaded each candidate for governor to sign such a bill if it passed" the legislature. The result of this campaign was the creation, in 1939, of a Public Library Service Division (PLSD) of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH). While remaining under ADAH jurisdiction, the new division operated autonomously in assisting public libraries. Not until 1959 did it achieve full independence as the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS).

APLS, of course, has its own story (as well as its own RDA); but after 1939 the development of Alabama's public libraries cannot be separated from it. The division's first director, Lois Ranier Green, had as her goal establishing "a library in every county." At first, the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided buildings, books, and a large percentage of her salary. World War II soon swallowed up that source of funding, and public libraries remained a low priority for several years. Ms. Green persevered, converting surplus ambulances to bookmobiles and persuading county governments to spend money on libraries as well as roads. She was aided by the broadening horizons of a global war (people "wanted to know about the places their children were being sent to fight") and by more accessible technology, as electricity became commonplace and Alabamians began to read at night. Nevertheless, progress remained gradual and intermittent. After receiving a paltry \$10,000 in state appropriations between 1939 and 1943, the PLSD got a windfall four times that large in 1944. "By 1953 [the year Ms. Green retired], there were 17 countywide libraries, five regional, and 49 municipal libraries." However, 15 counties still lacked a public library at all, and local spending on libraries surpassed the state's by a margin of almost 9-1.

During the following decade, evolving social policies allowed Alabama's libraries to benefit from a renewal of federal support. In 1956, Congress passed a Library Service Act (sponsored by Alabama's Senator Lister Hill and Congressman Carl Elliott) to promote the development of small libraries for rural localities. "Under LSA funding, expenditures for public libraries would rise from 34 cents . . . to 68 cents per capita . . . 10 bookmobiles would be added to serve remote areas; 24 counties would participate in establishment grants; and 63 independent libraries would be established." Other kinds of federal intervention cast Alabama in a less flattering light, as when a children's book about "the marriage of a white and a black rabbit" disappeared from library shelves after patrons complained it was "pro-integration." Despite the era's social problems, economic progress for libraries continued under a 1965 extension of the LSA. New facilities were built through federal grants administered by APLS. "Library service was extended to correctional institutions and a public library was established for the blind and physically handicapped."

Under the directorship of Elizabeth Beamguard (1960-1975), the now-independent APLS embarked on an ambitious program of education for librarians, offering workshops, in-service training, scholarships, and graduate degrees. State appropriations for public libraries increased throughout the 1970s and '80s, and they were more than matched by federal assistance. In 1988, "nearly \$811,000" in federal money was distributed to Alabama's libraries under the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), which (as amended in 1990) provided three categories of

grant funding: Title I extended services to disadvantaged Alabamians (such as the elderly, institutionalized, physically handicapped, and illiterate); Title II funded library construction and renovation projects; and Title III assisted projects to “develop and strengthen interlibrary cooperation [and] resource sharing.” Subsequently, the Library Services Technology Act (1996) targeted “underserved urban and rural communities” and children “from families with incomes below the poverty line” for additional financial support. However, the LSTA’s primary goal was to “promote library services that provide all users [with] access to information through State, regional, national, and international electronic networks.” Through APLS, grants were made available for Alabama libraries “to acquire or share computer systems and telecommunications technologies” (Alabama Administrative Code, Chapter 520-2-1).

Under this impetus, the end of the millennium saw APLS spearheading “a cooperative statewide effort among librarians, educators, Governor Don Siegelman, and a grassroots campaign by the public” to obtain \$3 million in legislative funding for the Alabama Virtual Library, which began operation in the year 2000. The Virtual Library is expected to provide “every public school child, every student in a two-year or four-year college, and every public library patron in the state [with] access to thousands of reliable resources online, including full-text magazine articles, electronic reference books, encyclopedias, medical information, statistical sources, and homework aids” (Solinet, *SoliNEWS* [Fall 2000], p. 13). While such technological sophistication may diminish the traditional roles of books and buildings (and even librarians themselves), it is a measure of how far Alabama’s public libraries have come since the early days of women’s clubs and bookmobiles.

## **Agency Organization**

Alabama’s 223 public libraries range in size from multi-departmental metropolitan systems, with branches in numerous localities and teams of professional librarians, to tiny local libraries staffed by part-time volunteers. All libraries must possess at least “a basic collection of materials, a regular staffing level, and an established service schedule” (Alabama Administrative Code, Chapter 520-2-2). Under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 11-90-1 through -4, independent libraries are supervised by a board of five members appointed by the governing body. The board is responsible for “electing” a library director and other employees, ensuring the provision of service, and overseeing the library’s operations and finances. A master’s degree in library science is not mandatory for directors, as APLS is authorized to “advise as to the proper qualifications of librarians” (Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-8-5).

In Chapter 520-2-2, the Alabama Administrative Code establishes additional requirements that public libraries must meet to qualify for state assistance. These include holding board meetings at least four times a year; having written by-laws and operations policies; sending the director twice annually to APLS-sponsored in-service training; and submitting to APLS a five-year plan (with annual updates) for meeting its community’s information needs, expanding capital, and developing collections and staff. The library must also meet federal Equal Opportunity guidelines and maintain certain minimum operating hours, based on the size of its area of service.

Public libraries may be created and funded by either counties or municipalities. “In lieu of establishing or maintaining” its own public library, a county or municipality “may contract... with the library board of another political unit or governmental agency” to establish “joint library service” on mutually agreeable terms (Code of Alabama 1975 § 11-90-4; further guidelines are provided in Alabama Administrative Code § 520-2-3-.01). Cooperation among existing libraries is, however, strictly voluntary. While five regional libraries are scattered haphazardly across the state – often providing training, purchasing supplies, storing records, or distributing state and federal funds to libraries within their region – they have no formal authority over other libraries. Under its mandate to develop “a cooperative system” of public library service (Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-8-1 through -10), APLS has broad oversight authority over local library operations. Even so, libraries’ participation in that agency’s consulting and grant-writing services is a matter of self-interest rather than compulsion.

## **Agency Function and Subfunctions**

The mandated function of the Public Libraries in Alabama to “provide a system of library service to be made easily available to all citizens of the county or municipality through central library, branches, stations, book trade services, or other appropriate means” (Code of Alabama 1975 § 11-90-3). As such, it is one of the agencies responsible for performing the Public Services function of Alabama government as described in the “Functional Analysis of Alabama Government.”

In the performance of its mandated function, the Public Libraries may engage in the following subfunctions:

- **Acquiring and Maintaining Collections.** Public libraries acquire books; newspapers; microforms; and other printed, recorded, or electronic media through purchase or donation. They create shelf lists and finding aids for locating and tracking these materials. Public libraries also hold items that may not be integral parts of their collections, such as reference sources, items borrowed for exhibits, materials belonging to historical or genealogical societies, or public records in the legal custody of other agencies.
- **Cataloging Collections.** Over the years, Alabama’s public libraries have cataloged their holdings (originally on cards, but more recently electronically) according to any of several standardized classification systems. Currently, most Alabama libraries share a common, electronic union catalog of holdings.
- **Providing Access to Collections and Reference Assistance.** Public libraries allow patrons to borrow most items in their collections, and they provide reference access to non-circulating items. Many libraries have reference departments to assist patrons with research requests, and all now have access to the internet resources of the Alabama Virtual Library. For security and planning purposes, libraries monitor patron access to and use of their collections.

- **Assisting with Community Education and Activities.** Using funds available through Title I of the LSCA, public libraries serve as community information and referral centers (Alabama Administrative Code, Chapter 520-2-1). They promote access to learning and information resources to all types of libraries for individuals of all ages; provide services through electronic networks; and provide targeted library services to people of diverse backgrounds.
- **Administering Internal Operations.** A significant portion of the Public Libraries' work includes general administrative, financial, and personnel activities performed to support the programmatic areas of the agency including:

**Managing the Agency:** Activities include internal office management activities common to most government agencies such as corresponding and communicating, scheduling, meeting, documenting policy and procedures, reporting, litigating, legislating (drafting, tracking), publicizing and providing information, managing records, and managing information systems and technology.

**Managing Finances:** Activities include budgeting (preparing and reviewing budget package, submitting the budget package to the Department of Finance, documenting amendments and performance of the budget); purchasing (requisitioning and purchasing supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products received); accounting for the expenditure, encumbrance, disbursement, and reconciliation of funds within the agency's budget through a uniform system of accounting and reporting; authorizing travel; contracting with companies or individuals; bidding for products and services; and assisting in the audit process.

**Managing Human Resources:** Activities include recruiting and hiring eligible individuals to fill positions within the agency; providing compensation to employees; providing benefits to employees such as leave, health insurance, unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, injury compensation, retirement, and death benefits; supervising employees by evaluating performance, granting leave, and monitoring the accumulation of leave; training and providing continuing education for employees; investigating and disciplining.

**Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources:** Activities include inventorying and accounting for non-consumable property and reporting property information to the appropriate authority; leasing and/or renting offices or facilities; providing security for property managed by the agency; insuring property; and assigning, inspecting and maintaining agency property.

# Records Appraisal of Public Libraries

The following is a discussion of the three major categories of records created and/or maintained by the Public Libraries: Temporary Records, Permanent Records, and Records No Longer Created.

## Temporary Records

Temporary records should be held for what is considered their active life and be disposed of once all fiscal, legal, and administrative requirements have been met. Some of the temporary records created by the board are discussed below:

- **Accession/Deaccession Logs or Files.** These records list books or other items added to or removed from the library's collection. They include item descriptions and acquisition information, but not financial documentation such as purchase orders. With the advent of on-line cataloging, some libraries no longer keep accession information for their own collection up to date. Books in the circulating collection are frequently replaced and have only ephemeral importance. Therefore, unlike those of archives or museums, public libraries' accession/deaccession files lack the evidentiary value required to be appraised as permanent.
- **Donor Files.** These records document all gifts of books, other items, or money to the library by private individuals or corporations. They may include the names of donors, descriptions of donated items, reasons for donations, and correspondence with donors and donors' families. Donor files are important in establishing the provenance of donations and may help to document library collection policies and goals. Although files on individual items donated may lack permanent significance once the item is deaccessioned from the library, files relating to monetary donations are auditable records. In this edition of the RDA, they are reappraised with "2 years following audit" as a minimum requirement and a recommendation that libraries retain files that document major financial donations permanently.
- **Cataloging Data and Card Files.** With the advent of automated cataloging, there is now (as noted above) little consistency among Alabama public libraries in the retention of cataloging information. Most libraries catalog their collections information in OCLC, the national on-line database. Holdings information is shared on a statewide union catalog. Some libraries, however, retain traditional card files ("card catalogs") for convenience or to document items that were never cataloged electronically. While data on individual holdings is by nature transitory, the presence of OCLC – or a successor automated database – should ensure that collection information for Alabama public libraries is maintained for as long as it is needed.
- **Interlibrary Loan Records.** These records document the public library's loaning or borrowing of books and other items that are requested by its patrons or those of other libraries. In the original RDA, their disposition was: "Retain for 3 years after the item is returned or replaced." However, interlibrary loan records are not auditable; nor does the



Administrative Code mandate a retention period. Our discussion with APLS indicates that many public libraries purge electronic interlibrary loan information immediately after an item is returned. In this edition of the RDA, their disposition is therefore revised to: “Retain for useful life.”

- **Records Management Documentation – Records request forms.** Under *Blankenship v. City of Hoover* (590 So2d 245 [Ala. 1991]), local government agencies may ask visitors who wish to examine records to complete an identification form before permitting access. Typically, these forms contain such information as the visitor’s name and contact information, the date and time of the request, the records requested, the reason for requesting access, and staff comments. Although such information may not be cited as a reason for denying access, the forms have value in discouraging records’ theft or damage by documenting who has used them. ADAH recommends the use of records request forms as one component of an agency’s records access policy. The proposed disposition assumes the records will be auditable, like others covered in this RDA item. As always, any forms involved in litigation or criminal charges arising from records access issues should be retained until conclusion of the case.

## **Permanent Records**

The Archives Division recommends the following records as permanent:

### **Acquiring and Maintaining Collections**

Permanent documentation of library collection policies and goals is found in Administrative Policies and Procedures. Although neither is permanent, Accession/Deaccession Logs or Files and Donor Files also provide long-term documentation of items in public library collections.

### **Cataloging Collections**

Cataloging information for Alabama public library collections is maintained in a national automated database, OCLC, Inc., and shared statewide through a statewide union catalog.

### **Providing Access to Collections and Reference Assistance**

Permanent documentation of library access and reference policies is found in Administrative Policies and Procedures. Library registration files and circulation files also provide long-term documentation of this subfunction, although files for individual patrons and holdings are not permanent.

### **Assisting with Community Education and Activities**

- **Educational Program Administrative Files.** Public libraries may provide educational programs (adult literacy programs, summer reading programs, genealogical workshops, etc.) for various constituencies in their community. Specific activities will vary widely among individual libraries. Information on state- or federally-funded programs will be

documented in records covered elsewhere in the RDA, such as grant narrative and financial reports, annual reports to APLS, and routine financial records. Records listed under Educational Program Administrative Files provide the same documentation for locally-funded programs, and include additional records applicable to educational programs at any funding level.

## **Administering Internal Operations: Managing the Agency**

- **Board Meeting/Hearing Minutes, Agendas, and Packets.** These records include meeting and hearing minutes of the library board, along with agendas and packet materials (budgets, work plans, reports, and other background information) reviewed by board members prior to meetings. They are essential for documenting the evolution of library policies and procedures as approved by the board.
- **Administrative Policies and Procedures.** These records provide essential documentation of a variety of issues in library development, such as collection policies and goals; circulation, reference, and other patron concerns; censorship; financial planning; and relations with government or private agencies and library employees. Library policies and procedures may be available in printed form to patrons and the general public.
- **Administrative Correspondence.** These records include correspondence and related files of the library director, department and branch directors, or other administrative officers concerning library policies and procedures, as well as broad questions of administration. They may also include correspondence with other agencies responsible for overseeing library operations. Administrative correspondence documents the impact of agency decision-makers on policy development.
- **Historical and Publicity Files.** These records may include press releases, newsletters, brochures, scrapbooks, photographs, videotapes, audiotapes, speeches, and public service announcements designed to publicize events or programs at the library. They document the “public relations” aspect of library operations and, cumulatively, provide an ongoing history of its role in the community.
- **Annual Reports.** A public library may create annual narrative and/or financial reports describing its activities during a calendar or fiscal year. Such reports provide summary documentation of library functions, projects, and activities, as well as an ongoing history of library operations. These records are distinct from standardized reports submitted to APLS. They may be submitted to the “parent” local government agency (e.g., county commission/city council), published, or retained for the library’s own use.
- **Alabama Public Library Service Reports and Statistics – Five-Year Plans for Library Development.** Public libraries periodically submit statistics and reports to APLS, and compliance with APLS reporting requirements is a condition of their receiving state or federal funds. At the local level, only five-year development plans are appraised as permanent. They assist public libraries in analyzing trends in library development and provide historical “snapshots” of their changing goals. Records documenting

the implementation of local libraries' development plans are retained by APLS and will be appraised under its RDA.

- **Websites.** Public libraries may develop web sites for providing information on such matters as operating hours, collections, and policies and for responding to patron research requests. The disposition statement calls for permanently preserving a complete copy of the website annually, or as often as significant changes are made.

## **Administering Internal Operations: Managing Finances**

- **Budgeting Records.** These records document preparing a library budget request package and reporting the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance. The annual budget is approved by the county commission, municipal council, or independent library board.
- **Annual Statements of Fiscal Responsibility.** The Alabama Administrative Code § 520-2-2.05 states: "All public libraries receiving state aid funds appropriated by the State of Alabama and administered by the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) in any fiscal year shall, in the first quarter of the subsequent fiscal year, provide to APLS a Statement of Fiscal Responsibility denoting the usage of state aid funds during the most recently completed fiscal year." This is a far more detailed financial statement than a public library's audit report. The present item redefines and provides an Administrative Code citation for the annual financial report previously appraised as permanent in this and other local RDAs.
- **Audit Reports.** Municipal libraries are audited by their town's or city's independent auditor on the same basis as any other department. However, county libraries are not routinely audited by the Examiners of Public Accounts. Their boards, along with those of regional or other independent libraries, may arrange for their own audits. APLS does not always receive copies of public library audit reports, as their Annual Statements of Fiscal Responsibility provide a more detailed accounting. APLS may request a library's audit report, or may ask for it to be audited by the Examiners, if circumstances warrant. Where they do exist, audit reports continue to be appraised as permanent.
- **General Ledgers – general ledgers and detailed year-end trial balances created prior to 1975.** The general ledger is the record of final entry for all financial transactions: collecting fees and other revenue, purchasing, investing, administering state and federal funds, and general accounting. Originally, general ledgers were manually created; now, these records and another financial summary, the detailed year-end trial balance, are often electronically created. This revision of the RDA limits permanent retention to general ledgers and trial balances created before 1975. Later records retain the 10-year period previously approved for those in electronic format. Annual Statements of Fiscal Responsibility reports and Audit Reports provide permanent documentation of libraries' financial practices.

- **State Funds and Expenditures.** These records document the library’s application for state funds to purchase items or materials, construct facilities, or carry out programs authorized by state or federal authorities. They also document the conduct of such projects and the expenditure of funds. Final narrative reports, which summarize the project’s goals and accomplishments, are appraised as permanent.
- **Federal Grant Project Final Narrative Reports.** Public libraries are frequently the recipients of federal grants. Final narrative reports summarize the goals of the grant, how the money was used, and what was accomplished. They have permanent evidentiary value in documenting important library projects. At the request of APLS, the retention of financial and other subsidiary, grant-related records is changed from our generic RDA requirement (3 years for accounting records and 6 years for financial reports and other subsidiary information) to 7 years plus the current fiscal year. This requirement matches the one for records documenting the public libraries’ administration of state funds (State Funds and Expenditures).

## **Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources**

- **Employee Handbooks.** These records provide guidance to new employees about personnel rules and other policies and procedures. They offer “snapshot” documentation of the public library’s personnel policies. More detailed information is documented under Administrative Policies and Procedures.
- **Employee Newsletters.** Internal newsletters are created for library employees to communicate personnel policies, news of important events, and information on individual employees. They provide additional documentation of library personnel policies over time.
- **Training Records – Training standards, policies, procedures, and publications.** These records document the library’s overall standards, policies, and procedures in providing specialized training to its employees. They may include general policy statements or guidelines, training manuals, or other publications. Like other administrative policies and procedures, they are appraised as permanent. Documentation of libraries’ training standards may also be needed to demonstrate that employees received adequate training in the performance of their job responsibilities.
- **“Drug-Free Workplace” Records.** This is a new series now created by most local governments. The records document library substance abuse policies and training, as well as drug and alcohol testing of library employees. Under the federal Americans With Disabilities Act, such medical-related records may not be included in employee personnel files. The proposed disposition is generally based on 49 CFR Ch. VI 655.71 (10-1-05 edition). Under federal requirements, training records, testing records, and medical information (drug treatment referrals) are all short-term. However, library policies and procedures on drug and alcohol abuse are scheduled here as permanent, like other policy-related records.

## **Administering Internal Operations: Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources**

- **Library Building Construction and Renovation Files – Plans, Specifications, and Blueprints.** These records document the design, construction, repair, and renovation of public library buildings and other facilities. Plans, specifications, and blueprints provide important historical documentation of the library's appearance over time, as well as necessary information for future renovation or construction projects.

## **Permanent Records List Public Libraries**

### **Acquiring and Maintaining Collections**

1. Educational Program Administrative Files – Planning documentation and final narrative reports

### **Administering Internal Operations: Managing the Agency**

1. Board Meeting/Hearing Minutes, Agendas, and Packets
2. Administrative Policies and Procedures
3. Administrative Correspondence
4. Historical and Publicity Files
5. Annual Reports
6. APLS Reports and Statistics – Five-year plans for library development
7. Websites – Annual “snapshots”

### **Administering Internal Operations: Managing Finances**

1. Budgeting Records – Approved annual budgets
2. Annual Statements of Fiscal Responsibility
3. Audit Reports
4. General Ledgers and Routine Trial Balances – Records created prior to 1975
5. State Aid Funds and Expenditures – Final narrative reports
6. Federal Grant Project Files – Final narrative reports

### **Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources**

1. Employee Handbooks
2. Employee Newsletters
3. Training Records – Training standards, policies, procedures, and publications
4. “Drug-Free Workplace” Records – Drug/alcohol abuse policy and procedures documentation

### **Administering Internal Operations: Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources**

1. Library Building Construction and Renovation Files – Plans, specifications, and blueprints

# **Public Libraries Records Disposition Authority**

This Records Disposition Authority (RDA) is issued by the Local Government Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-13-5 and 41-13-22 through 24. It was compiled by the Archives Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), which serves as the Commission's staff, in cooperation with representatives of the Public Libraries. The RDA lists records created and maintained by the Agency in carrying out their mandated functions and activities. It establishes minimum retention periods and disposition instructions for those records and provides the legal authority for the Agency to implement records destruction.

Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. These records must be protected from "mutilation, loss, or destruction," so that they may be transferred to an official's successor in office and may be made available to members of the public. Records also must be kept in accordance with auditing standards approved by the Examiners of Public Accounts (Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-12-2, 36-12-4, and 41-5-23). For assistance in implementing this RDA, or for advice on records disposition or other records management concerns, contact the agency records manager or ADAH Archives Division at (334) 242-4452.

## **Explanation of Records Requirements**

The RDA shall govern the disposition of all records, regardless of format, created by the agency from creation to dissolution. Please contact the staff of the Department of Archives and History before destroying any records created prior to 1940.

This RDA supersedes any previous records disposition schedules or RDAs governing the retention of the records created by the Agency. Copies of superseded schedules are no longer valid and may not be used for records disposition.

The RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records listed below, regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept. Electronic mail, for example, is a communications tool that may record permanent or temporary information. As for records in any other format, the retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the subfunctions to which the records belong.

Certain other record-like materials are not actually regarded as official records and may be disposed of under this RDA. Such materials include (1) duplicate record copies that do not require official action, so long as the creating office maintains the original record for the period required; (2) catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not document agency activities; (3) stocks of blank stationery, blank forms, or other surplus materials that are not subject to audit and have become obsolete; (4) transitory records, which are temporary records created for short-term, internal purposes, may include, but are not limited to, telephone call-back messages, drafts of ordinary documents not needed for their evidential value, copies of material sent for information purposes but not needed by the receiving office for future business, and internal communications about social activities; (5) honorary materials, plaques,

awards, presentations, certificates, and gifts received or maintained by the agency staff. They may be disposed of without documentation of destruction.

## **Records Disposition Requirements**

This section of the RDA is arranged by subfunctions of the Agency and lists the groups of records created and/or maintained as a result of activities and transactions performed in carrying out these subfunctions. The Agency may submit requests to revise specific records disposition requirements to the State Records Commission for consideration at its regular biannual meetings.

### **Acquiring and Maintaining Collections**

**1.01 Accession/Deaccession Logs or Files.** These records list books or other items added to or removed from the library's collection. They include item descriptions and acquisition information, but not financial documentation such as purchase orders.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded or no longer useful.

**1.02 Shelf Lists and Finding Aids.** These records provide an inventory and location index of all library holdings. They assist library staff in physically locating books and other items in the library's collections.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded or no longer useful.

**1.03 Donor Files.** These records document all gifts of books, other items, or money to the library by private individuals or corporations. They may include the names of donors, descriptions of donated items, reasons for donations, and correspondence with donors and donors' families.

Disposition is as follows:

a. **Donated books or other collection items.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until the donation items is deaccessioned from the library.

b. **Monetary donations (lists of donors; documentation on individual donations).**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

*Note: Libraries may wish to maintain files that document major financial donations permanently.*

**1.04 Local Government Records Deposit Agreements.** These records are formal agreements executed between the public library and local government agencies for the library to accept physical custody of public records (including county newspapers) that are still legally in the custody of the donating agency. They include a list of all deposited items. (*Note: Deposit agreements must be approved by the Local Government Records Commission. For more information, contact the ADAH.*)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after termination of the agreement.



## **Catalog Collections**

**2.01 Catalog Data and Card Files.** These records document the cataloging of library holdings in OCLC or other standard bibliographical formats. Cataloging records may include data entry worksheets, separate databases of independent or regional library holdings, and card catalogs retained for convenience or to document items that were never cataloged electronically.

Disposition is as follows:

- a. **Data entry worksheets.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until verification of data in cataloging database.
- b. **Databases of independent or regional library collections.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded or no longer useful.
- c. **Card files (card catalogs).**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until verification of all data in cataloging database. Once data has been verified, retain card files for useful life.

## **Providing Access to Collections and Reference Assistance**

**3.01 Registration Files.** These records document patrons' applications for library cards and preserve identifying information on individual borrowers. They are restricted records under the provisions of the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-8-10.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the patron last used the library's collections.

*Note: If application information is retained on microfilm or in database, the original paper applications may be destroyed.*

**3.02 Circulation Files.** These records document the circulation of library materials to individual borrowers. They include all information that identifies patrons utilizing particular books or other library materials. These records are restricted under the provisions of the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-8-10.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**3.03 Circulation and Attendance Reports and Statistics.** These records document usage of the library and the overall circulation of library materials. They include Monthly Circulation and Attendance Reports and may be used in preparing the annual statistical report to APLS.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

**3.04 Interlibrary Loan Records.** These records document the public library's loaning or borrowing of books and other items that are requested by its patrons or those of other libraries.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

## **Assisting with Community Education and Activities**

**4.01 Educational Program Administrative Files.** These records document educational programs for various community constituencies (such as reading programs, workshops, etc.).

- a. **Planning documentation and final narrative reports (locally funded programs).**  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- b. **Financial reports and routine financial records (locally-funded programs).** See section 7 of the RDA for further definition of financial records.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- c. **Participant registration information.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until completion of final narrative report.
- d. **Program evaluations forms.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until completion of final narrative report.

**4.02 Exhibit Files.** These records document the planning, research, and creation of staging of exhibits at the library. Information includes planning documentation, descriptions of items, catalogs, loan agreements for borrowed items, certificates of insurance, and shipping receipts. Disposition is as follows:

- a. **Planning documentation, exhibit catalog (sample).**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.
- b. **Loan agreements, certificates of insurance.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after return of loaned or borrowed item.
- c. **Correspondence, shipping receipts, and other routine financial records.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. See sections 5 and 6 of the RDA.

## **Administering Internal Operations: Managing the Agency**

**5.01 Board Meeting/Hearing Minutes, Agendas, and Packets.** These records are meeting and hearing minutes of the library board, along with agendas and packet materials (budgets, work plans, reports, and other background information) reviewed by board members prior to meetings. They document the evolution of library policies and procedures as approved by the board. Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**5.02 Recordings of Board Meetings.** Audio or video recordings provide a verbatim account of discussion at library board meetings. They are normally used only as an aid to preparation of the minutes.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until minutes are approved.

**5.03 Administrative Policies and Procedures.** These records provide essential documentation of a variety of issues in library development, such as collection policies and goals; circulation, reference, and other patron concerns; censorship; financial planning, and relations with government or private agencies and library employees.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**5.04 Administrative Correspondence.** These records include correspondence and related files of the library director, department and branch directors, or other administrative officers concerning library policies and procedures, as well as broad questions of administration. They may also include policy-related correspondence with other agencies that oversee library operations.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**5.05 Administrative Reference Files.** These records include materials not created by the library that are collected and used only as reference sources of information.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**5.06 Historical and Publicity Files.** These records may include press releases, newsletters, scrapbooks, brochures, photographs, videotapes, audiotapes, electronic media, speeches, and public service announcements designed to publicize events or programs at the library.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**5.07 Annual Reports.** Public libraries may create annual narrative and/or financial reports describing their activities during a calendar or fiscal year. Such reports provide summary documentation of library functions, projects, and activities, as well as an ongoing history of library operations. These records are distinct from reports provided to APLS.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**5.08 Alabama Public Library Service Reports and Statistics.** Libraries periodically submit statistics and reports to APLS. Compliance with APLS reporting requirements may be a condition of the receipt of state or federal funds. The following dispositions apply to the library's copies of such records:

- a. **Five-year plans for library development.**  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- b. **Annual updates and statistical reports.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.
- c. **Other reports and statistics.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.
- d. **Data entry forms.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until approval of applicable report.

**5.09 Routine Correspondence.** This type of correspondence documents the daily conduct of library operations in contacts with patrons, other governmental agencies, local organizations or businesses, and the general public. Routine correspondence relates to such “everyday” matters as answering inquiries and providing information, rather than to library policy development or issues of long-term administrative.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**5.10 Legal Case Files.** These records document lawsuits filed against the public library.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after the case is closed.

**5.11 Mailing Lists.** These records include various standard lists of names and addresses used by library staff members.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**5.12 Mail, Telephone, and Fax Machine Logs.** These records are lists of mail, telephone, and fax machine contacts and related data.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**5.13 Calendars.** These records include desk calendars and other scheduling devices for library personnel.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

#### **5.14 Records Management Documentation**

- a. **Records documenting implementation of the public libraries approved RDA.** These records include records management plans, records inventories, records finding aids, and records destruction notices.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

- b. **Copy of approved RDA.** The RDA provides legal guidelines for the disposition of all library records. The public library should maintain a signed copy of its RDA and may disperse duplicate copies as needed.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

- c. **Records request forms.** A public library may ask visitors wishing to examine records to complete an identification form before providing access. Information in such forms may include visitor’s name and contact information, date and time of request, records requested, reason for request, and staff comments.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit or until any resulting litigation is concluded.

**5.15 Websites.** Public libraries may develop websites for providing information on such matters as operating hours, collections, and policies, and for responding to patron research requests.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. Preserve a complete copy of website annually, or as often as significant changes are made.

**5.16 Computer Systems Documentation.** These files include hardware and software manuals and diskettes, and warranties.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for system documentation 2 years after the audit period in which the former hardware and software no longer exist anywhere in the agency and all permanent records have been migrated to the new system

## **Administering Internal Operations: Managing Finances**

**6.01 Budgeting Records.** These records document preparing a library budget request package and reporting the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance.

- a. **Approved annual budgets.** These are final library budgets as approved by the independent library board, county commission, or municipal council.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- b. **Records documenting budget performance during the budget cycle (budgeted and actual revenue reports, revenue reports, investment reports, expenditure reports, encumbrance reports, etc.).**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**6.02 Annual Statements of Fiscal Responsibility.** These reports, submitted to APLS in the first quarter of each fiscal year, denote a detailed accounting of the public library's use of state aid funds during the most recently completed fiscal year. They provide a more detailed financial statement than the library's audit report.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**6.03 Audit Reports.** These records document the library's overall financial condition during each audit period.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

### **6.04 Accounting Records.**

- a. **Routine accounting records.** These are records of original entry for routine accounting transactions, such as lists of fines collected, journals, registers, ledgers, receipts, bank statements, deposit slips, cancelled checks, etc.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- b. **General ledgers and detailed year-end trial balances.** These are records of final entry for all financial transactions: collecting revenue (taxing and licensing), purchasing, investing, administering state and federal funds, and general accounting.
  - i. Records created prior to 1975.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

- ii. Records created in or after 1975.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the record was created.

**6.05 Purchasing Records.** These records document the requisitioning and purchasing of supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods and services, and authorizing payment for products. Records in this series may include, but are not limited to, purchase orders, quotes, invoices, purchasing card receipts, and receiving reports.

Disposition: Temporary record. Retain 2 years after audit.

**6.06 Contracts, Leases, and Agreements.** These records document the negotiation, fulfillment, and termination of all contracts, leases, and agreements entered into by the public library, including final contracts that are subject to the bid process.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after expiration of the contract (Code of Alabama 1975 § 6-2-33).

**6.07 Records of Formal Bids.** These records document the library bid process, which is subject to the requirements of Title 41, Chapter 16 of the Code of Alabama 1975.

- a. **Records documenting bids on products or services obtained by the library.** These records include library requests for bid proposals, successful and unsuccessful bids by product or service vendors, and related correspondence.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years after bids were opened (Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-16-54[e]).
- b. **Lists of eligible bidders.** Libraries may compile lists of persons or businesses who have filed requests to be notified of bids on projects, products, or services required by the library. *Note: Requests from bidders to be included on the list may be treated as Routine Correspondence.*  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after last contact with listed vendors.
- c. **Correspondence with vendors slated for removal from the list of eligible bidders.** Under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-16-52(a), any listed bidder who fails to respond after receiving three solicitations for bids may be stricken from the eligible list. This correspondence documents the library's efforts to warn unresponsive vendors that they will be dropped from the list unless they ask to remain eligible. It includes forms or letters sent out by the library and any responses from vendors.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the audit period in which the bidder is removed from the list.

**6.08 State Funds and Expenditures.** These records document the library's application for state funds to purchase items or materials, construct facilities, or carry out programs authorized by state or federal authorities. They also document the conduct of such projects and the expenditure of funds and may include correspondence with APLS regarding project administration.

- a. **Financial records, interim reports, and supporting documentation.** These records include background materials, interim narrative reports, financial reports, correspondence, and other supporting documentation for expenditure of funds awarded. Also included are records relating to unsuccessful applications.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years after submission of final financial report or denial of application, plus current fiscal year.
- b. **Final narrative reports.** Final narrative reports are submitted according to the requirements of the funding agency. They summarize the goals of the project, how the money was used, and what was accomplished.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**6.09 Federal Grant Project Files.** These records document the library's application for federal funds to purchase items or materials, construct facilities, or carry out programs authorized by federal authorities. They also document the conduct of grant projects and the expenditure of funds and may include correspondence with APLS regarding grant administration.

- a. **Financial reports, interim narrative reports, correspondence, and subsidiary financial records.** These records include financial reports, background materials, interim narrative reports, non-financial supporting documentation, accounting or purchasing records, any other subsidiary financial documentation of federal grants. Also included are records relating to unsuccessful grant applications.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years after submission of final financial report or denial of application plus the current fiscal year.
- b. **Final narrative report.** Final narrative reports are submitted according to the requirements of the funding agency. They summarize the goals of the grant, how the money was used, and what was accomplished.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**6.10 Travel Records.** These records document requests by library personnel for authorization to travel on official business and related materials such as travel reimbursement forms and itineraries.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**6.11 Employer Tax Returns and Related Files.** These records include, but are not limited to, employer state tax returns, federal tax returns, local tax returns, unemployment quarterly reports, and Federal Forms 1099. These records do not pertain to individual employees but instead describe the local government agency as a whole.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

## **Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources**

**7.01 Job Classifications and Pay Plans.** These files document job classifications and pay rates for all positions covered by the library's personnel system. They include the qualifications, duties, and pay range for each library position.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after position is reclassified.

**7.02 Job Recruitment Materials.** These records document efforts by the library to advertise positions and attract qualified personnel.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the position is filled.

**7.03 Employment Applications.** These are applications by individuals for employment in library positions.

a. **Successful Applications.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain in employee personnel file.

b. **Unsuccessful Applications.**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

c. **Supplemental data forms.** Information on these forms includes the job applicant's name, Social Security number, date of birth, race, gender, and recruitment source. The form may be separated and filed separately from other information on the employment application.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after employee separation or 3 years after an unsuccessful application.

d. **I-9 forms.** These federal forms are used to verify that persons seeking employment are eligible to work in the United States. Disposition of the employing agency's copy is provided by 8 CFR 274a.2.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after employment or 1 year after termination, whichever is longer.

**7.04 Certification Records.** These records document the process of employee certification. They pertain to individuals deemed qualified for library positions after submitting an application.

a. **Employment registers.** These records are lists of individuals declared qualified for certain positions. They include the job classification, names of eligible applicants, and their ranking on the list.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after superseded.

b. **Employee certification files.** These records document the certification process with individual job applicants. They include questionnaires, examination results, training and experience records, grades, notifications, and returned postcards and letters.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.



**7.05 Employee Handbooks.** These records provide guidance to new employees about personnel rules and other policies and procedures.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**7.06 Employee Newsletters.** Internal newsletters are created for library employees to communicate personnel policies, news of important events, and information on individual employees.  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**7.07 Employee Personnel Files.** These records document each library employees' work history; they are generally maintained as case files. A file may include information on an employee's training, performance evaluations, disciplinary actions, promotions and demotions, and awards.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee.

**7.08 Employee Work Schedules.** These records document the daily and weekly work schedules of all library employees.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**7.09 Leave and Attendance Records.** These records document the attendance and leave status of library personnel, both generally and for individual employees.

- a. **Individual employee leave and attendance records (including time sheets).** These are records documenting hours worked, leave earned, and leave taken by individual library employees.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- b. **Employee cumulative leave/attendance records.** These records document the final leave status (cumulative leave) of individual library employees.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee.
- c. **Employee Sick Leave Donation Records.** These records document the donation of sick leave to their colleagues by library employees.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**7.10 Payroll Records.** These records document library payrolls, as well as pay status and payroll deductions for individual employees.

- a. **Annual payroll earnings reports/records documenting payroll deductions of tax purposes.** These are summaries of employees' earnings during a fiscal year, including all deductions and federal Form 941.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 50 years after the end of the tax year in which the records were created.
- b. **Records documenting library payrolls.** These records include pre-payroll reports, payroll check registers, payroll action forms, payroll/overtime certification reports, etc.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

- c. **Records documenting payroll deduction authorizations.** These records document payroll deductions for taxes (including W-4 forms), retirement and insurance contributions, and all other deductions withheld from the pay of individual employees. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee.
- d. **Records documenting payroll deductions.** These records document taxes (including W-2 forms), retirement contributions, and all other deductions withheld from the pay of individual employees. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.
- e. **Employee “cafeteria plan” (flexible benefits) records.** These records document salary-reduction type plans authorized by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Section 125.
  - i. General information about the plan. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.
  - ii. Employee applications, correspondence, enrollment cards, and files. Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after termination of participation in the plan.

**7.11 Employee Insurance Program Enrollment and Claims Files.** These files document the library’s efforts to assist employees and their dependents to enroll in health/life insurance programs.

- a. **General information on the program.** Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.
- b. **Employee applications, correspondence, and enrollment cards and files.** Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after program termination or employee separation.
- c. **Employee claims files.** Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**7.12 Workmen’s Compensation Insurance Claim Files.** These files document all claims pertaining to work-related injuries or diseases made by library employees (See Code of Alabama 1975 § 25-5-4).

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 12 years and after the end of the fiscal year in which the transaction occurred.

**7.13 Unemployment Compensation Files.** These files provide documentation related to employee claims for unemployment compensation.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**7.14 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Records.** These records document administration of the federal Family Medical Leave program, including leave taken, premium payments, employer notices, and correspondence.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**7.15 Affordable Care Act Compliance Files.** These records encompass the documentation submitted to the federal government to demonstrate compliance with the Affordable Care Act.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after submission.

**7.16 Training Records.** These records document the library's provision of in-service training and professional development for its employees, including workshop records and evaluations.

Disposition is as follows:

- a. **Training standards, policies, procedures, and publications.** These records document the library's overall standards, policies, and procedures in providing specialized training to its employees. They may include general policy statements or guidelines, training manuals, or related publications.

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

*Note: Permanent retention applies to the file copy. Duplicates may be destroyed when no longer needed.*

- b. **Training administrative files.** These records document the process of conducting training for employees. They may include individual lesson plans, audiovisual presentations or materials, lists of attendees at workshops or training sessions, sign-in sheets, unpublished handouts, and appraisals or training completed by participants.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**7.17 "Drug-Free Workplace" Records.** These records document library substance abuse policies and programs, as well as drug and alcohol testing of library employees. Under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, such medical-related records may not be included in Employee Personnel Files. They are generally governed by the requirements of 49 CFR Ch. VI 655.71 (10-1-05 edition). The types of records to be maintained include:

**Training Records** (drug and alcohol abuse policy statements, names of employees attending training, documentation of training provided to supervisors on detecting and dealing with employee drug abuse)

**Records related to the collection process** (collection logbooks; documentation of random, pre-employment, reasonable suspicion, or post-accident testing; documentation of employees' inability to provide testable urine samples for medical reasons)

**Records related to drug testing** (test results, custody and control forms, and documentation of employees' refusal to submit to testing or employee challenges to test results or employee challenges)

**Records related to employees' referral to substance abuse recovery programs** (referrals by professionals, documentation of program completion, follow-up testing of employees)

Retention periods for "Drug-Free Workplace" records are as follows:

- a. **Drug/alcohol abuse policy and procedures documentation.**  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- b. **Positive employee drug or alcohol test results, documentation of employee refusals to take tests, documentation of employee referrals and treatment in substance abuse programs, copies of library's annual MIS reports submitted to FTA.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.
- c. **Records related to the collection process and employee training.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.
- d. **Negative employee drug or alcohol test results.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

**7.18 Employee Assistance Program Files.** These are administrative records documenting the referral of employees to various assistance programs and subsequent services provided.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

## **Administering Internal Operations: Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources**

**8.01 Library Building Construction and Renovation Files.** These files document the design, construction, repair, and renovation of library buildings and other facilities. Included may be building specifications and floor plans, plans of proposed work, lists of materials, correspondence, memoranda, reports, blueprints, site plans, elevation details, and financial records. Disposition is as follows:

- a. **Plans, specifications, and blueprints.**  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.
- b. **All other records.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for life of building.

### **8.02 Insurance Policies and Claims.**

- a. **Insurance policies.** These policies document all insurance policies carried by the agency.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the policy was terminated.

- b. **Insurance claims.** These records document insurance claims filed by the local government agency.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the audit period in which the claim was settled.
- c. **Certificates of liability.** These records provide proof of insurance. Certificates are typically valid for a period of one year or less.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

**8.03 Space Management Plans/Records of Space Assignments.** These records document the assignment of office space in library buildings and facilities. They include operating plans for the assignment of such space.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded or no longer useful.

**8.04 Annual Inventory Records.** These records document all personal property, equipment, or capital outlay by the public library on an annual basis.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**8.05 Receipts of Responsibility for Property.** These records document all personal property, equipment, or capital outlay by the public library on an annual basis.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until return of item to property manager.

**8.06 Facilities/Building Maintenance Work Orders.** These records document routine maintenance activities in library buildings and facilities.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

**8.07 Facilities/Building Inspection Records.** These records document the routine safety and maintenance activities in library buildings and facilities, and such potentially dangerous items as furnaces, elevators, electronic doors, etc.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**8.08 Facilities/Building Security Records.** These records document the library's efforts to provide security to members of the public using its buildings and facilities, as well as to monitor the admission of visitors to these areas. They may include sign-in sheets for visitors, alarm system log sheets, and records documenting security staff's responses to alarms or emergencies.

- a. **Security monitoring or response recordings.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 30 days or until final disposition of any criminal cases or litigation for which recordings provide evidence.
- b. **All other records.**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

## **8.09 Facilities/Buildings Safety Plans and Training Files.**

- a. **Safety plans.** These records document the manner in which agency staff are directed to respond in emergencies. Examples of safety plans include, but are not limited to, fire evacuation protocols, severe weather plans, and active shooter protocols.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.
- b. **Training files.** These records document the training and practice undertaken by staff to implement safety plans. Examples of training and practice include, but are not limited to, fire drills, tornado drills, and bomb threat drills.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**8.10 Motor Pool Use Records.** These records document the use of motor pool vehicles by library employees.

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**8.11 Parking Records.** These records document the use of library parking facilities by employees or visitors. They may include parking permits, cards, and applications for these items.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**8.12 Vehicle and Equipment Ownership and Maintenance Files.** These records document the maintenance of all vehicles and other equipment owned or maintained by the public library. They may include titles, bills of sale, repair records, and related correspondence.

- a. **Ownership records (titles, bills of sale, etc.).**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following the audit period in which equipment or vehicle is removed from inventory.
- b. **Maintenance files (work orders, repair records, and related financial records).**  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

**8.13 Long-Distance Telephone Logs.** These records document the use of the library's long-distance telephone systems by employees during business hours.  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years following audit.

# **Requirement and Recommendations for Implementing the Records Disposition Authority (RDA)**

## **Requirement**

Under the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-13-23, “no county, municipal, or other local government official, shall cause any... record to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without first obtaining the approval of the local government records commission.” This RDA constitutes authorization by the Local Government Records Commission to dispose of records as stipulated, with the condition that the responsible official must submit a Local Government Records Destruction Notice to the ADAH Government Records Division to document the destruction. The ADAH, which serves as the commission’s staff, retains local records destruction documentation as a permanent record.

## **Recommendations**

In addition, the Agency should make every effort to establish and maintain a quality record-keeping program by conducting the following activities:

The Agency should designate a staff member in a managerial position as its records liaison/records manager, who is responsible for: ensuring the development of quality record keeping systems that meet the business and legal needs of the agency, coordinating the transfer and destruction of records, ensuring that permanent records held on alternative storage media (such as microforms and digital imaging systems) are maintained in compliance with national and state standards, and ensuring the regular implementation of the agency’s approved RDA.

Permanent records in the Agency’s custody should be maintained under proper intellectual control and in an environment that will ensure their physical order and preservation.

Destruction of temporary records, as authorized in this RDA, should occur agency-wide on a regular basis—for example, after the successful completion of an audit, at the end of an administration, or at the end of a fiscal year. Despite the RDA’s provisions, no record should be destroyed that is necessary to comply with requirements of the Open Meetings Act, audit requirements, or any legal notice or subpoena.

The agency should maintain full documentation of any computerized record-keeping system it employs. It should develop procedures for: (1) backing up all permanent records held in electronic format; (2) storing a back-up copy off-site; and (3) migrating all permanent records when the system is upgraded or replaced. If the agency chooses to maintain permanent records solely in electronic format, it is committed to funding any system upgrades and migration strategies necessary to ensure the records’ permanent preservation and accessibility.

Electronic mail contains permanent, temporary, or transitory record information. Although e-mail records can be printed out, filed, and retained according to the RDA’s requirements, the office should preferably employ an electronic records management system capable of sorting e-

mail into folders and archiving messages having long-term value.

The staff of the Local Government Records Commission or the Examiners of Public Accounts may examine the condition of the permanent records maintained in the custody of the Agency and inspect records destruction documentation. Agency records managers and/or the ADAH archivists are available to instruct the staff in RDA implementation and otherwise assist the Agency in implementing its records management program.

The Local Government Records Commission adopted this revision to the Records Disposition Authority on October 28, 2020.

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Steve Murray, Chairman  
Local Government Records Commission

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Date

By signing below, the agency acknowledges receipt of the retention periods and requirements established by the records disposition authority.

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Director, Public Library

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Date



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